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WE CLAIM:

1. A catheter comprising:  
an elongate body;  
a distal section coupled to the body, the distal section being deflectable upon  
5 application of an external force by a user;  
a longitudinally extending inner lumen defined by the body and the tip, the  
lumen being adapted to deliver a diagnostic, prophylactic, or therapeutic agent into a  
subject;  
a curvature-adjustment mechanism configured to adjust the radius of curvature  
10 of the distal section.
2. The catheter of claim 1, wherein the curvature-adjustment mechanism  
comprises an elongate stiffener tube that is slidable longitudinally relative to the body,  
the curvature-adjustment mechanism providing a fulcrum spaced a distance from the  
15 distal end of the distal section, the distance being variable by longitudinal movement of  
the curvature-adjustment mechanism to vary the radius of curvature of the distal  
section.
3. The catheter of claim 2, wherein the stiffener tube is concentrically  
20 disposed on the body.
4. The catheter of claim 2, wherein the stiffener tube extends through the  
body.
- 25 5. The catheter of claim 2, wherein the stiffener tube comprises a sleeve  
disposed on the outside of the body.
6. The catheter of claim 1, wherein said distal section comprises a slotted  
tube formed with a plurality of slots spaced longitudinally along one side of said slotted  
tube.

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7. The catheter of claim 6, wherein said slots provide collapsible spaces between longitudinally spaced portions of the slotted tube on opposite sides of the slots to reduce resistance to bending.

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8. The catheter of claim 6, wherein a pull wire is operatively connected to a distal end portion of said slotted tube on said one side of said slotted tube.

9. The catheter of claim 8, wherein said pull wire extends longitudinally of said elongate body toward a proximal end portion of said elongate body to permit a user to longitudinally shift said pull wire to control deflection of said slotted tube.

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10. The catheter of claim 6, wherein said curvature-adjustment mechanism comprises an elongate stiffener tube that is slidable longitudinally relative to said slotted tube to provide a fulcrum spaced a distance from the distal end of the distal section, the distance being variable by longitudinal movement of the curvature-adjustment mechanism to vary the radius of curvature of the distal section.

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11. The catheter of claim 10, wherein said stiffener tube is concentrically disposed relative to the slotted tube.

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12. The catheter of claim 10, wherein the stiffener tube extends into the interior of said slotted tube.

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13. The catheter of claim 10, wherein the stiffener tube comprises a sleeve disposed exteriorly of the said slotted tube.

14. The catheter of claim 6, wherein said distal section comprises a flexible outer tube surrounding said slotted tube.

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15. A catheter comprising:  
an elongate body,  
a distal section coupled to the body, the distal section being deflectable upon  
5 application of an external force by a user, the distal section comprising an elongate  
flexible outer tube and an elongate slotted tube having a plurality of slots spaced  
longitudinally along one side of said slotted tube, with said slotted tube extending  
longitudinally through a major portion of said outer tube,  
a longitudinally extending inner lumen defined by the body and distal section  
10 adapted to deliver a diagnostic, prophylactic, or therapeutic agent into a subject, and  
a curvature-adjustment mechanism configured to adjust the radius of curvature  
of the distal section comprising an elongate stiffener tube which is slidable  
longitudinally relative to the body, the curvature-adjustment mechanism providing a  
fulcrum spaced a distance from the distal end of the distal section, with said distance  
15 being variable by longitudinal movement of the stiffener tube to vary the radius of  
curvature of the distal section.
16. The catheter of claim 15, wherein the stiffener tube is concentrically  
disposed relative to said body.
- 20 17. The catheter of claim 15, wherein the stiffener tube extends through the  
body.
18. The catheter of claim 15, wherein the stiffener tube comprises a sleeve  
25 disposed on the outside of the body.
19. The catheter of claim 15, wherein said slots provide collapsible space  
between portions of the slotted tube on opposite sides of the slots to minimize resistance  
to bending.

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20. The catheter of claim 15, wherein a pull wire is operatively connected to a distal end portion of said slotted tube on said one side of said slotted tube.

5           21. The catheter of claim 20, wherein said pull wire extends longitudinally of said elongate body toward a proximal end portion of said elongate body to permit longitudinal shifting of said pull wire to control deflection of said slotted tube.

22. A method of delivering a therapeutic agent into a subject comprising:  
10           positioning a catheter according to claims 1 or 15 proximal to an anatomic structure of a subject; wherein the longitudinally extending inner lumen of said catheter includes a therapeutic agent,

              ejecting a therapeutically sufficient amount of said therapeutic agent from said inner lumen onto said anatomical structure, thereby  
15           effecting the treatment of said anatomical structure with said therapeutic agent.

23. The method according to claim 22 wherein said anatomical structure is a tissue.

24. The method according to claim 22 wherein said anatomical structure is an organ.

20           25. The method according to claim 22 wherein said anatomical structure is a cavity and wherein the ejecting step delivers the therapeutic agent within said cavity.

26. The method according to claim 22 wherein said anatomical structure is a space and wherein the ejecting step delivers the therapeutic agent within said space.

27. The method according to claim 24 wherein said organ is the heart.

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28. The method according to claim 23 wherein said tissue is selected from a group consisting of an artery, vein, lymphatic duct, oropharynx bronchial tree, digestive tract, biliary tracts and central nervous system.

29. The method according to claim 24 wherein said organ is selected from a group consisting of a urethra, bladder, ureter, and renal pelvis.

30. The method according to claim 22 wherein said therapeutic agent has a phase selected from the group consisting of a solid, liquid and gas.

31. The method according to claim 22 wherein said therapeutic agent is radiation.

32. The method according to claim 22 wherein said therapeutic agent is a pharmaceutical agent selected from the group consisting of pain relievers, anti-cancer agents, antibiotics, anti-thrombotic agents, antivirals, and enzymatic inhibitors.

33. The method according to claim 22 wherein said therapeutic agent is a chemical agent selected from the group consisting of ethanol, phenol, a chelator, an ablative agent, and a contrast agent for imaging.

34. The method according to claim 22 wherein said therapeutic agent is a biologically active agent selected from the group consisting of a nucleic acid, amino acid, proteins, glycoproteins, proteoglycans, polypeptides, polymer formulations of biological agents, autologous cells, allogeneic cells, xenogeneic cells, stem cells, endothelial progenitor cells, ex-vivo expanded cells, bone marrow cells, whole cells, viruses, prions, biochemicals, vitamins, and hormones.

35. The method according to claim 22 wherein said therapeutic agent is radiant energy selected from the group consisting of acoustic, thermal, and electromagnetic energies.

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36. A method of delivering a mechanical agent into a subject comprising:  
positioning a catheter according to claims 1 or 15 which includes a mechanical agent within the longitudinally extending inner lumen proximally to an anatomic structure of a subject at a distance suitable for the functionality of said mechanical agent,  
5     advancing said mechanical agent from said inner lumen toward said anatomical structure,  
manipulating said mechanical agent, and  
actuating said mechanical agent.
- 10     37. The method according to claim 36 wherein said anatomical structure is a tissue.
38. The method according to claim 36 wherein said anatomical structure is an organ.
- 15     39. The method according to claim 36 wherein said anatomical structure is a cavity.
40. The method according to claim 36 wherein said anatomical structure is a space.
41. The method according to claim 38 wherein said organ is the heart.
- 20     42. The method according to claim 37 wherein said tissue is selected from a group consisting of an artery, vein, lymphatic duct; oropharynx bronchial tree, digestive tract, biliary tracts and central nervous system.
43. The method according to claim 38 wherein said organ is selected from a group consisting of a urethra, bladder, ureter, and renal pelvis.

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44. The method according to claim 36 wherein said mechanical agent is selected from a group consisting of a thermometer, sensor, camera, probe, needle, knife, electrocautery snare, biopsy forcep, and suction tube.